

Refocusing Secondary Education Recommendations for KBE Priorities 2005-06

Priority: By including Refocusing Secondary as a KBE priority, the Board concurs with the national agenda that high schools need to be redesigned to meet the needs of a the 21st century economy. Kentucky's vision for high school students is that each one will reach proficiency and transition from the K12 system prepared to participate successfully in a next level of learning in both postsecondary education and the workforce - not simply one or the other. Preparation has multiple dimensions, including mastery of academic expectations, the ability to apply that knowledge in real world situations, development of personal and social skills, a thoughtful career plan, and the new types of literacy needed to be competitive in the 21st century economy.

Current Status: Like the schools themselves, state and local policy lag behind in creating systems of incentives and accountability that refocus both educators and students on higher levels of individual achievement against clearly articulated standards and expectations. KDE's action agenda will function to ensure that all aspects of work impacting middle and high schools, as well as the alignment between high school and postsecondary experiences, are focused on:

- Zero Dropouts - Supporting every student to persist to graduation with a plan for transitioning to the next level of learning
- A Learning Guarantee - Readyng every student to leave high school prepared to participate in the next level of learning without need for remediation; and,
- A Plan for Life - Providing every student with the opportunity to perform at high levels in a chosen field.

Next Level: Resources to support the redesign of high schools and the refocusing of middle and high school education have not been the focus of funding priority. Prior efforts at high school reform were not supported or sustained with funding or ongoing KDE assistance. High school redesign is now the focus of a nationwide education agenda.

Nonacademic Data:

Dropout Rate (grades 9-12)

- The high school dropout rate slightly increased from 3.34 in 2003 to 3.35 in 2004.
- The male dropout rate continues to be greater than the female dropout rate.
- The male dropout rate remained unchanged at 3.91 from 2003 to 2004.
- The female dropout rate slightly increased from 2.75 in 2003 to 2.77 in 2004.
- The African American and Hispanic dropout rates continue to be greater than the White dropout rate.
- The White dropout rate slightly decreased from 3.23 in 2003 to 3.22 in 2004.
- The African American dropout rate increased from 4.45 in 2003 to 4.56 in 2004.
- The Hispanic dropout rate increased from 4.65 in 2003 to 4.77 in 2004.

Retention Rate (grades 4-12)

- The retention rate decreased from 3.38 in 2003 to 3.27 in 2004.
- The 9th grade retention rate increased from 10.03 in 2003 to 10.79 in 2004 and continues to exceed

the rates at other grade levels.

Transition to Adult Life

- The percent of graduates that were considered successful for transition to adult life slightly decreased from 96.03 in 2003 to 96.00 in 2004.
- The percent of graduates attending college in Kentucky continues to increase from 48.8 in 2003 to 49.3 in 2004.

Attendance Rate

- The attendance rate slightly decreased from 94.31 in 2003 to 94.26 in 2004.

Graduation Rate

- The graduation rate increased from 79.15 in 2003 to 81.29 in 2004.

Kentucky Board of Education Role: The Kentucky Board of Education has identified Refocusing Secondary Education as a priority. The KBE should take a highly visible leadership role in helping communicate to the education community, policy makers and the general public the Why, What and How of refocusing secondary education. This includes clear articulation through policy and, potentially, legislative action the expectation is that each Kentucky student will be supported to graduation college and workplace ready.